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### *The CIA Above the Law?*

President Johnson probably will be asked to remind the CIA that it is not above the law. An appeal to him is being planned in connection with a case now pending in Federal court in Baltimore. It is a suit for damages by a man who charges that he was falsely accused of being a Soviet agent by an employee of the CIA.

The hush-hush agency, however, has refused to allow its employe to make a deposition, and it has asked that the case be thrown out of court. Its claim is that the accusation was made under orders, and that the employe therefore was speaking for the Government which, of course, cannot be sued.

The CIA, like the FBI before it, fears that its secrets might be revealed in testimony under oath. But are CIA secrets entitled to greater protection than the law affords an American citizen? And what of the amazing implications of the CIA's theory?

Under it, an employe of the CIA or almost any other Government agency might be ordered by a relatively minor official to blacken reputations or otherwise violate the rights of citizens. Yet there would be no way of holding the agent or his superior to accountability. There would be no way of assuring a citizen of justice. That's how it is in a police state.

The CIA would not become involved in situations such as this one if it confined itself to gathering information—and, we trust, solid, factual information—and avoided overt activities at home and abroad. Unless the American philosophy of government is radically changed, Federal agents cannot be authorized arrogantly to violate the life, reputation or property of citizens. So if the attitude of the CIA in the Baltimore affair is not changed, the courts should unleash the full authority of the law against palpable contempt.